Pacific Islands Fishery News

Newsletter of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Winter 2000

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EIS Delay Closes Prime Swordfish Grounds

On Nov. 22, 1999, US District Judge David Ezra banned the Hawaii longline fleet from 1.2 million square miles of prime tuna and swordfish grounds on the high seas in the North Pacific. Hawaii longline vessels are not allowed to fish north of 28°N longitude (no northern boundary) between the latitudes of 150°W to 168°W until the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) completes an up-to-date environmental impact statement (EIS) for the fishery. The intent of the injunction, which took effect on Dec. 22, 1999, is to protect the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*). The suit was filed by the Sea Turtle Restoration Project and Center for Marine Conservation, represented by Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund.

NMFS says it will take 18 months to two years to complete the EIS. The

Continued on page 2

In This Issue

American Samoa's Fishing Heritage 1
Swordfish Grounds Closed 1
NGOs Sue to Close Hawaii Lobster, Bottomfish Fisheries 2
Tuna Cannery: Production Up, Prices Down 4
Poaching Alia from Samoa 5
American Samoa's 100th Flag Day 5
Western Pacific Recipe 5
2nd Annual World Fisheries Day 6
102nd Council Meeting 7
Fishery Observers Newsletter 7
Council Calendar 8
In Memory: Richard "Kuni" Sakamoto 8

The 90-foot F/V *Faivaimoana*, the largest longliner in Samoa's present fleet, is able to preserve quality bigeye and yellowfin tuna for the export sashimi market as well as freeze albacore for the American Samoa canneries. The vessel has obtained permits to fish in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of many neighboring countries.

Preserving American Samoa's Fishing Heritage

Fa'a Samoa (the traditional Samoan way of life) exerts a strong influence in American Samoa on when and why people fish, how they distribute their catch and the meaning of fish within society. These resources move through a complex exchange system that supports the *'aiga* (the extended family) as well as the *matai* (a hierarchy of chiefs) and village ministers.

Fish are a significant component during such customary exchanges as *fa'alavelave* (mutual assistance to kin in times of need), *tautua* (service to the kin group and its matai), *fesoasoani* (an individual response to a minor need of a kin), *to'onai* (a ceremony after Sunday service in which village leaders and visitors reaffirm cultural and spiritual solidarity) and *fa'ataualofa* (the giving or selling of items at reduced price to friends or kin as an expression of a sustained friendship).

As an American Samoan eats about 148 pounds of seafood yearly (the highest per capita consumption of seafood in the United States), it is not surprising that fish plays an important role in fulfilling these obligatory exchanges. In fact, the reliance on fish has caused some problems. The necessary contribution of *faisua* (giant clams) for *fa'alavelave* events have been reported as a problem, along with poachers and predators, in the successful farming of the clams, which take years to grow. The attempted theft of 140 cases of canned albacore tuna from the Sun Kist Samoa plant last year was also attributed to a *fa'alavelave*.

Decline in shoreline fisheries has resulted in increasing dependence by American Samoans on pelagic fisheries to sustain domestic fishing effort and cultural obligations. These fisheries

Continued on page 2

American Samoa *continued from page 1*

historically targeted skipjack tuna, shark and bottomfish and used fleets of canoes. The status of a *tautai* (master fishermen) on occasion rivaled those of a *maitai*. Even ordinary fishermen held social status related to their skills. The whole village participated in the preparation of fishing trips and shared the catch.

Today, American Samoa's domestic commercial fishing fleet consists of 47 small *alia* catamarans equipped for longlining. However, new fishery development projects funded by the US Administration for Native Americans (ANA) aim to revitalize American Samoa's fishing heritage.

* The nonprofit Auau Fisheries Development Projects is constructing a 40-foot double-hull vessel with an 8-ton capacity, hydraulically powered reel and longline gear. A project goal is to train young American Samoan fishermen.
* The nonprofit organization L.I.F.E. has purchased the 53-foot steel-hulled F/V *Gogosina*. The 38-ton vessel will initially target bottomfish for fresh export. The goal is to train young American Samoan fishermen.
* The nonprofit Tautua Samoa Association will be developing a seafood processing enterprise for fresh bottomfish and pelagic fish at the Sen. Daniel Inouye Industrial Park. It plans to augment its ANA grant with one from the US Economic Development Administration. The project is expected to provide 20 to 40 full-time jobs.

Complementing these initiatives is the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council's proposed amendment to its Pelagics Fisheries Management Plan that would restrict vessels larger than 50 feet from fishing within 50 nautical miles of most of the American Samoa islands. Large vessels currently operating within these waters would be grandfathered in.

The amendment aims to safeguard American Samoan fishing communities by encouraging the domestic harvest of pelagic fish while assuring against overcapitalization.

The Council adopted the large-vessel area closure measure in 1998. But the amendment was not approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the Secretary of Commerce. A revised amendment will be reviewed at the 102nd Council meeting.

NGOs Sue to Close Lobster, Bottomfish Fisheries

A lawsuit alleging that the Hawaiian monk seal is facing extinction because lobster and bottomfish fisheries in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) are depriving them of prey was filed Jan. 26 in federal district court in Honolulu. The plaintiffs, three environmental groups represented by Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, seek closure of the fisheries. The suit purports that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) failed to properly manage the fisheries to avoid harming the seals.

On the day the suit was filed, Hawaii members of eight advisory groups, composed of scientists and industry representatives, were in Honolulu to discuss the NWHI fisheries. According to presentations at the Jan. 25–27 meeting, as well as scientific reports, the major known causes of monk seal mortality in the NWHI are sharks, aggressive males killing seal pups and female seals, entanglement in discarded or lost fishing nets, and emaciation, especially for juveniles at French Frigate Shoals during the past 10 years. Except at French Frigate Shoals, monk seal populations in the NWHI are stable or growing.

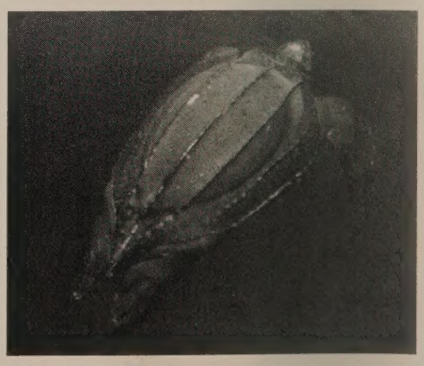
Parasites, disease, PCB contamination, human disturbance and lack of prey are among the speculative reasons for the emaciation at French Frigate Shoals. In 1997, NMFS reported that the two leading hypothesis to explain the lack of prey at the site are 1) the local seal population reached its carrying capacity in the 1970s and 1980s, and essentially diminished its own food supply, and 2) carrying capacity was simultaneously reduced by changes in oceanographic conditions and resulting decrease in productivity. Lobsters, whose low abundance at French Frigate Shoals predates the start of the fishery in the late 1970s, are among hundreds of prey species in the region. Monk seal dependence on lobsters is not known. While fatty acid studies underway may provide the answer, the results of these studies are currently inconclusive.

Historically, there has been very little lobster fishing at French Frigate Shoals. None were taken between 1991 and 1997, and less than 1 percent of the NWHI lobster fishing effort took place at French Frigate Shoals in 1998 and 1999. The bottomfish fishery in 1999 took about 150 mt from the NWHI. About 4 percent of the fishing days were at French Frigate Shoals. Bottomfish are not considered a primary monk seal prey. By comparison, two species of ulua annually consume an estimated 30,000 mt of monk seal prey items, such as reef fish, eels, octopus and lobster at French Frigate Shoals, alone.

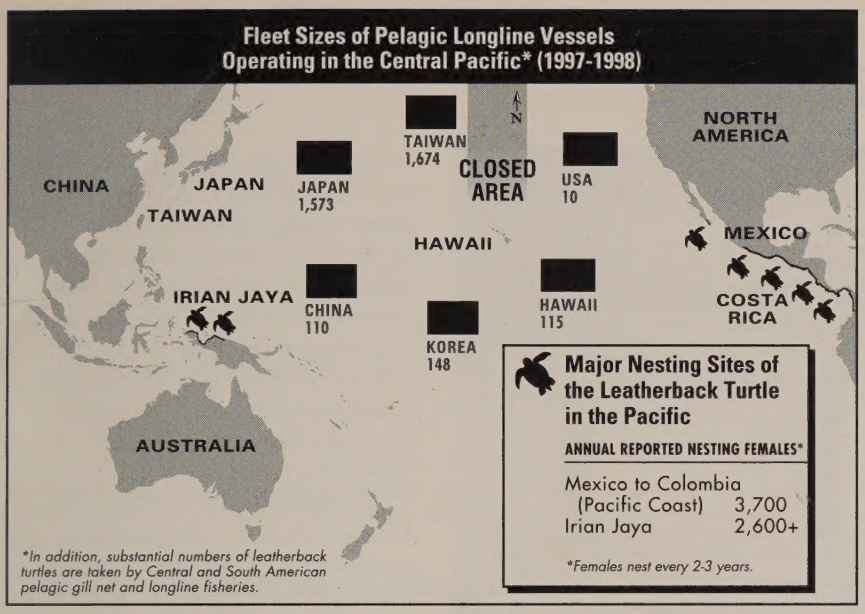
Last year, the Council began preparing environmental impact statements on the bottomfish and crustacean fisheries to take into account the latest scientific information and changes in the fishery. The statements are expected to be completed in 2000.

Swordfish Grounds *continued from page 1*

Council finds this to be unacceptable. It has asked the Secretary of Commerce to expedite the EIS and secure relief funds for fishers who face significant losses because of the closure.



Leatherback Turtle



The injunction will particularly devastate Hawaii fishing vessels targeting swordfish. Last year the closed area accounted for 33% of all swordfish landed in Hawaii and 46.3% of the swordfish from swordfish-directed fishing trips, as well as 35-65% of their tuna catch. Economic losses will also accrue to vessels targeting tunas since above average-sized tuna, with above average prices, also occur in the area closure.

The injunction may also weaken the US position at the ongoing Multilateral High-Level Conference (MHLC) on highly migratory species in the central and western Pacific. The US State Department and ministries of 27 other nations expect to end the conference and finalize plans for an international fishery management regime in August. National quotas for tuna species are to be set as early as 2001 and are likely to be based on historical catch and effort data. It is not in the best interest of the United States to have Hawaii's catch levels reduced at this critical time.

Moreover, the injunction will not significantly protect the Pacific leatherback turtle populations. The 1998 Biological Opinion on the longline fishery, which was approved by Judge Ezra, says the fishery's incidental catch and mortality of leatherback turtles are not likely to jeopardize the turtle population. The fishery is responsible for an estimated 10 to 11 leatherback mortalities annually; the acceptable level is 19.

The Biological Opinion says "the conservation measure likely to have the most immediate beneficial effect on the survival and recovery of depleted sea turtle populations is the protection of nests, hatchling and nesting females." Nesting beaches are located in Mexico and Costa Rica in the eastern Pacific and in Irian Jaya (Indonesia) in the western Pacific. None are located in the United States, including Hawaii.

The injunction does not stop foreign longliners or domestic longliners based outside of Hawaii from fishing in the "banned area." These fleets are more than 30 times larger than the Hawaii longline fishery. In 1997-98, the Taiwanese and Japanese fleets operating in the central Pacific numbered 1,674 and 1,573, respectively.

The injunction does nothing to mitigate the estimated 2,000-plus leatherback turtle mortalities associated with the gillnet fleets based in Chile and Peru.

The injunction does not recognize major non-fishing threats to leatherbacks at sea, such as predation by humans, sharks and other animals; boat collisions; pollution; ingested debris (half of the leatherbacks in a recently study had ingested plastic, which resembles jellyfish, their primary food); toxins; disease; and weather.

Finally, the court injunction against the Hawaii longline fishery is an affront to the Council process. Established by Congress in 1976, the eight Regional Fishery Management Councils in the United States are authorized to create plans and regulations to manage the nation's fisheries so as to ensure access to the fisheries for commercial, recreational and subsistence purposes on a sustainable level.

Turtles and sharks are removed from the stomach of a large shark caught off the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Sharks are a major threat to turtles throughout their lives. Other major threats include disturbance of nesting sites, egg poaching, marine debris and foreign gillnet fisheries.

Tuna Cannery: Production Up, Prices Down

Star Kist accounts for 50% of the US tuna canning industry, followed by Bumble Bee (25%) and Chicken of the Sea (17%). Star Kist operates in Samoa, Puerto Rico, Seychelles, Ghana and Ecuador.

Star Kist Samoa and Samoa Packing tuna canneries are the largest employers in the Territory of American Samoa. With a production increase of 50% in the past three years, Star Kist is also the largest tuna plant in the world, packing 3 million cans daily.

The canneries began operations in the early 1950s. Until recently, about 30 US, Taiwan and Korean purse seiners based at Pago Pago supplied the bulk of the skipjack tuna for the cannery. Eight of these vessels (collectively known as the Caribbean Fishing Company) are owned by Star Kist. Additionally, about 40 foreign longliners, 47 domestic longline vessels and up to 250 longline vessels from neighboring Samoa (formerly, Western Samoa) have provided the canneries with increasing amounts of yellowfin and albacore tuna. In 1998, Pago Pago received 208,300 tons of fish worth approximately $232 million, making it the leading US port in terms of the dollar value of fish landings. Fleet expenditures for fuel, provisions and repairs are estimated to bring another $45 million to $92 million into the country (1994 estimates).

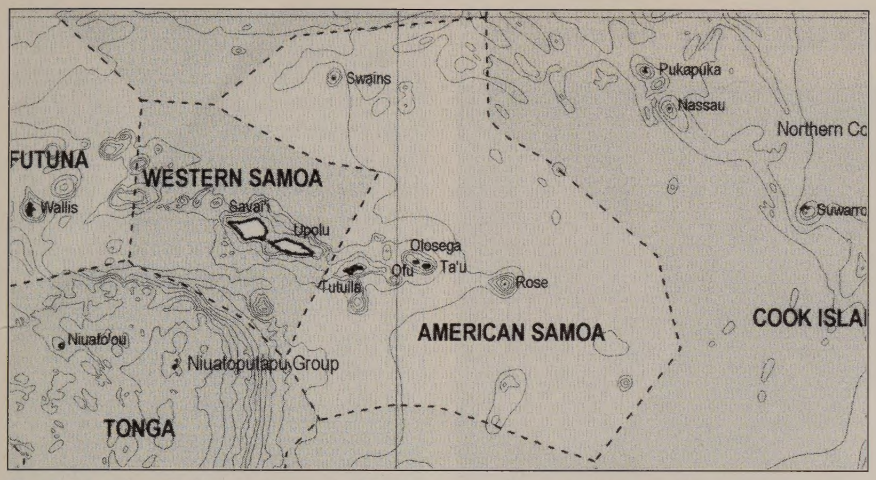
Last year, Star Kist began to also receive frozen tuna loins from Ecuador. The cleaned, boned loins now account for about 15% of StarKist Samoa's output. Additional frozen tuna loins from the Marshall Islands are scheduled to arrive in American Samoa beginning in 2000. A $6-million expansion project underway at Star Kist includes acquisition of a huge microwave oven to thaw the frozen loins; construction of a cold storage building to warehouse up to 3,000 tons of frozen loins; and expansion of the can plant. Star Kist sells empty cans to Samoa Packing as well as meets its own expanding needs.

While the canneries have seen a boom in production, independent purse seiners in Pago Pago have seen prices drop from $840/ton in May 1999 to $350/ton (i.e., 13 cents/lb) by the end of the year. One vessel reportedly had to travel to the Philippines to sell its catch.

In addition, some leaders of the American Samoa government say the canneries are not paying enough taxes and are considering adjusting their tax exemptions.

While stock assessments suggest that regional exploitation levels of skipjack and yellowfin tuna in the Pacific are in the low- to moderate-range and sustainable, over-capacity in the tuna industry is a problem. According to UN Food and Agriculture Organization data and Star Kist estimates, the 1997 global processing capacity was 262.1 million cases, while consumption that year was about 151.5 million cases.

With 2,800 workers, Star Kist Samoa is the territory's largest employer.



The fishing fleet in Samoa (formerly, Western Samoa) increased from 40 to 300 between 1990 and 1999. The vessels are increasingly fishing illegally in the EEZ surrounding American Samoa.

Poaching Alia from Neighboring Samoa

According to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), vessels from Samoa are increasingly fishing illegally within the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) surrounding American Samoa.

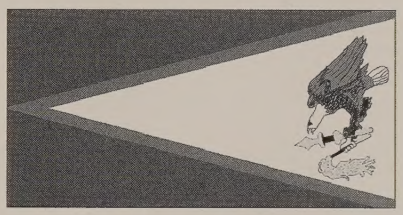
To solve the problem, NMFS OLE came up with an innovative settlement agreement for an illegal *alia* catamaran that was caught in 1998. In addition to paying a $3,500 fine to the US government, the boat owners were required to register their vessel with the Samoa government, comply with small vessel safety standards, install a global positioning system device on the vessel and allow NOAA fisheries or American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (AS DMWR) agents to board the vessel at any time to confirm continuing compliance. The most innovative facet of the settlement is educational. The boat owners are required to inform all other *alia* owners in Apia, Samoa, about the fishing prohibition within the EEZ around American Samoa. Failure to comply with the terms of the settlement agreement will result in reinstitution of the original penalty of $15,000 that would have been assessed by NMFS.

Other enforcement news from American Samoa …

- **NOVEMBER 1999:** During a crackdown on poaching in the Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary (NMS), a locally registered *alia* was arrested with 200 lbs of fish caught through the use of scuba. Included in the catch were undersized lobsters and several species that are becoming depleted. The arrest was made cooperatively by local and federal agencies. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed earlier in 1999 by the AS DMWR, Fagatele Bay NMS and NMFS OLE in order to handle such situations.
- **OCTOBER 1999:** At the 101st meeting of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, Dale Jones, chief of NMFS OLE, presented an award of $61,000 to the government of American Samoa. The revenue was generated from a penalty imposed on a fishing vessel illegally fishing in the territory's water. Provisions in the Magnuson-Stevens Act allows fines and/or penalties imposed on foreign fishing vessels to be turned over to US territorial and commonwealth governments.
- **AUGUST 1999:** The US Coast Guard refused to allow a Tongan vessel to offload 30 tons of tuna at Pago Pago harbor because it lacked proper documents. Missing were a valid Certificate of Financial Responsibility (COFR) showing that the vessel's owner and operator are financially capable of cleaning an oil spill resulting from the vessel and a loadline certificate indicating it meets the minimum requirements for watertight integrity and vessel stability. The vessel also did not have an English speaking person aboard nor did it give advanced notification of arrival, which is required for all vessels over 300 gross tons engaged in commerce.

America Samoa to Celebrate Its Centennial Flag Day

April 17, 2000, will mark the 100th Territorial Flag Day in American Samoa. The holiday recognizes the cession of Tutuila and Aunuu to the United States on April 17, 1900. The islands of the Manu'a Group, including Tau, Olosega, Ofu and Rose Islands, were ceded to the United States on July 14, 1904.



American Samoa is an unincorporated and unorganized territory of the United States. It is administered by the Office of Insular Affairs, US Department of the Interior. Since 1980, the territory has been represented in the US Congress by a nonvoting delegate to the House of Representative.

Tuna Candy Kabobs

This appetizer was a hit at the 1999 Guam Fishermen's Festival.

Ingredients:

2 lbs tuna (or marlin or swordfish)

Vegetables, such as onion, tomatoes, green peppers (optional)

1½ cups brown sugar

½ cup soy sauce

2 Tbsp. minced fresh ginger

3 Tbsp. chopped green onion

½ tsp. sesame oil

⅛ tsp. Chinese five spice powder

Trimmings and tips from cooking-grade tuna (marlin, swordfish) loins can be put to good use. Slice the fish into small portions suitable for kabobs. Skewer portions (alternating with pieces of vegetable) on bamboo or metal skewers.

Mix remaining ingredients together. Marinate the sticks in the mixture for 30 minutes.

Grill at high temperature until fish is medium rare. A crust of sugar will caramelize on the outside of the fish.

Gov. Benjamin Cayetano (center) proclaimed Nov. 21 as World Fisheries Day in Hawaii. Frank Goto, general manager of United Fishing Agency (front left) donated a 11-lb onaga to the fish drive. Also in attendance were (front right) Jim Cook, chair of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council and co-owner of Pacific Ocean Producers; (2nd row from left) Kitty Simonds, Council executive director; Frank Farm, Council member and president of Alii Holo Kai; Brett Schlemmer, Hawaii Foodbank operations director; Thomas Farewell, president, Oceanic Institute; and (far rear) Sean Martin, co-owner, Pacific Ocean Producers.

World Fisheries Day 1999

The historical, cultural and economic importance of fishing was recognized on Nov. 21, 1999, during the second annual World Fisheries Day. In Hawaii, the celebration lasted a week, beginning with a fisheries forum on Nov. 13, a proclamation signing by Gov. Benjamin Cayetano on Feb. 15 and a fish drive Nov. 15–22.

Fisheries Forum 2000 brought together more than 50 fishers, scientists, fishery mangers and members of the general public to discuss ways to ensure the health of Hawaii's ocean, reef and fish stocks for generation to come. Education, traditional native Hawaiian values and community-based management were among the proposed solutions. Forum co-sponsors included the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, Malama Na I'a, Oceanic Institute, Hawaii House of Representatives, Hawaiian Lifeguard Association and the University of Hawaii Marine Option and Sea Grant Programs. The forum was videotaped by Olelo, the corporation for community television. It can be viewed as a three-part series locally on channel 54 as follows:

8 p.m. Feb. 18; 8 p.m. Feb. 25; 8 p.m. March 3

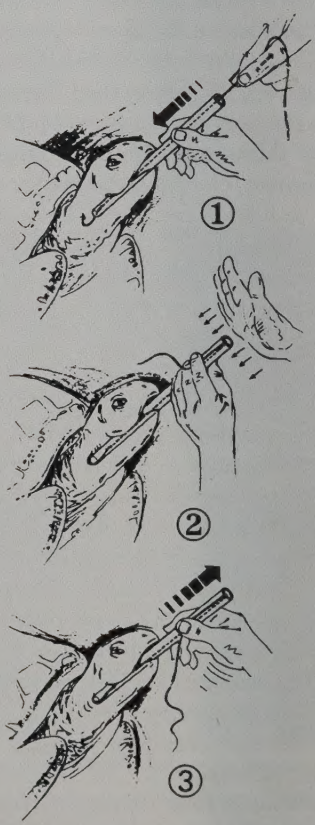
4 p.m. March 18; 4 p.m. March 25; 9 p.m. March 30

The dive club Alii Holo Kai contributed 200 lbs to the Council-organized fish drive to help feed the needy during Thanksgiving. Oceanic Institute, Pacific Ocean Producers, Honolulu Fishing Agency and several anonymous fishers also contributed to the more than 400 lbs collected for the Hawaii Foodbank.

Hooked Turtles

- If a turtle is hooked, pressure should be taken off the line and the animal brought on board the vessel if possible
- If the hook has been swallowed deeply, the line can be cut and the animal released, as the hook will dissolve.
- If the hook is in the soft tissues of the mouth, it can be pushed through and cut off.
- If this is not possible, then the line should be cut about 1 meter from the hook.
- Thread a 60 cm piece of thin piping or similar conduit over the line.
- Allow the conduit to slide down the throat of the animal until it rests against the hook (figure 1).
- Hit the conduit sharply (figure 2).
- Remove the hook (figure 3).

From Protected Species Handling Manual, *as reprinted in* Fork Length.



Council to Review Public Comments on Shark, Coral Reef Management

The Western Pacific Fishery Management Council will meet Feb. 28 to March 2 in Honolulu to review public comments on management measures for coral reef resources and oceanic sharks. Fishers and the general public in American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands and Hawaii were provided the opportunity to comment on the measures during a series of 10 meetings held in December 1999 and January 2000. The solicitation and review of public comments is part of the process for amending or developing a Council fishery management plan (FMP). The coral reef measures would be part of a new Coral Reef Ecosystem FMP and will be discussed on Tuesday, Feb. 29. A 50,000 shark quota for the Hawaii longline fleet would amend the Pelagics FMP and will be discussed on Wednesday, March 1.

Also on Wednesday, the Council will discuss a Pelagics FMP amendment to close waters in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) within 30 to 50 miles of American Samoa to vessels over 50 feet in length. The proposal aims to protect the fishing communities in the territory. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) disapproved an earlier version of the amendment in 1999.

On Thursday, March 2, the Council will review public comments received on its intent to prepare environmental impact statements (EISs) for the Bottomfish, Crustaceans and Precious Coral FMPs. An EIS evaluates potential environmental impacts of a major federal action and is required of all federal agencies under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Also on Thursday, the Council will discuss measures to add the EEZs surrounding the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) and the US Pacific Island possessions to the Bottomfish and Crustaceans FMP and the US EEZ surrounding NMI to the Precious Corals FMP. The US possessions include Johnston Atoll, Kingman Reef and Palmyra, Jarvis, Howland, Baker, Midway and Wake Islands.

The public is invited to attend the 102nd Council Meeting and to testify during public comment periods. For more information, call the Council at (808) 522-8200 or look on the Web at www.wpcouncil.org.

73rd Scientific and Statistical Committee Meeting

Council Office Conference Room, 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu

Feb. 22, 2000 (Tuesday), 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.: Electronic logbooks, fisheries data, status of the stocks, coral reef ecosystem plan, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands

Feb. 23, 2000 (Wednesday), 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.: Hawaii and American Samoa longline reports, American Samoa large vessel area closure and marine conservation plan, shark management, Sustainable Fisheries Act amendment, seabirds, turtles, marine debris, international issues, recreational fisheries

Feb. 24, 2000 (Thursday), 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.: Coral reef ecosystem management; precious corals*; bottomfish, crustaceans and precious corals fisheries management; Northern Mariana Islands and US Pacific Island possessions;*, fishery access initiative for indigenous US Pacific Islanders

102nd Council Meeting

Ala Moana Hotel, Hibiscus Ballroom II, 410 Atkinson Dr., Honolulu

Feb. 28, 2000 (Monday), 7:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m., (Hibiscus Ballroom I and Pakalana/ Anthurium Rooms): Enforcement and Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Standing Committees (7:30–9:30 a.m.); International Fisheries and Pelagics Standing Committees (9:30–11:30 a.m.); Bottomfish, Crustaceans, and Ecosystem and Habitat Standing Committees (1–3 p.m.); Indigenous Fishing Rights and Precious Corals Standing Committees (3–4 p.m.); Executive, and Budget and Program Standing Committees (4–6 p.m.)

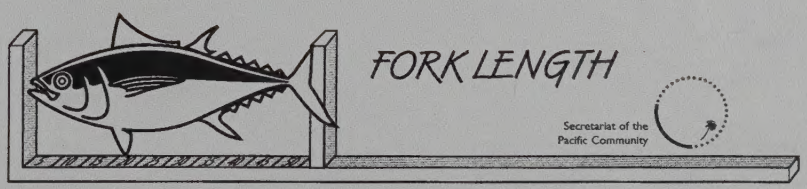
Feb. 29, 2000 (Tuesday), 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.: Island reports, fishery agency/organization reports, enforcement, VMS, coral reef ecosystem management, fishery rights of indigenous peoples

March 1, 2000 (Wednesday), 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.: Hawaii and American Samoa longline reports; American Samoa closed area measure** and marine conservation plan, shark management**, seabirds, turtles, marine debris, international management, national plan of action on fishing capacity

March 2, 2000 (Thursday), 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.: Bottomfish*, crustaceans*, precious corals*, program planning, administrative matters

March 3, 2000 (Friday), 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.: (Carnation Room): VMS Workshop

**public scoping hearing; **public hearing*



New Newsletter for Observers

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community's latest fisheries publication is a newsletter for the region's tuna fishery observers and port samplers. The inaugural issue of *Fork Length* features one of the region's oldest national observer program. Established in 1979 in the Federated States of Micronesia, the program has expanded its coverage on tuna vessels from around 10% in the 1980s to about 50% in the 1990s. Other articles concern marlin, identifying unusual fish and first aid. For more information, contact the SPC Oceanic Fisheries Programme, PO Box D5, 98848 Noumea Cedex, New Caledonia; or e-mail SPRTRAMPObs@spc.org.nc.

COUNCIL CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

22–24 73rd Scientific and Statistical Committee Meeting, Council Conference Room, Honolulu

28–March 2 102nd Council Meeting, Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu

MARCH

1 Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council, Interisland Terminal, 7th flr., Honolulu

2 US Coral Reef Task Force Meeting, Washington, DC

7–10 US Treaty Consultation, Niue

15–17 University of Virginia Oceans Conference, Rome

21 3rd Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Working Group Meeting, Honiara

23–26 Interannual, Decadal and Interdecadal Scales of Variability in the Pacific from the Tropics North to the Arctic Conference, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, La Jolla, California

APRIL

5–6 Pelagics Advisory Panel, Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu

8 National Fisheries Institute Spring Conference, Rancho Bernadok, California

11–19 6th Mulitlateral High Level Conference on Highly Migratory Species in the Central and Western Pacific, Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu

18–20 Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee, Charleston, South Carolina

26–28 Joint Coral Reef Ecosystem Plan Team and Ecosystem and Habitat Advisory Panel Meeting, Council Conference Room, Honolulu (tentative)

MAY

2–4 Pelagics Plan Team Meeting, Council Conference Room, Honolulu

3 Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

8–12 Albatross Symposium, Ilikai Hotel, Honolulu

16–18 74th Scientific and Statistical Committee Meeting, Council Conference Room, Honolulu

22–24 Regional Fishery Management Councils' Chairmen/Executive Directors Meeting, South Carolina

22–25 Tuna Conference, Lake Arrowhead, California

25 Tuna Trade Conference, Bangkok, Thailand

JUNE

5–9 Pacific Congress (PACON) on Marine Science and Technology, Hawaiian Regent Hotel, Honolulu

14–17 Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission Meeting, Costa Rica

20–23 103rd Council Meeting, Maui

Pacific Islands Fishery News

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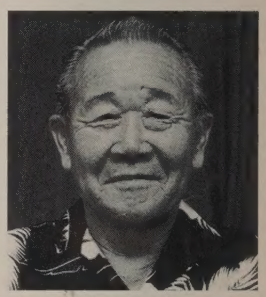
Vice Chairs	Judith Guthertz (Guam)
	Jack Tenorio (Northern Mariana Islands)
	Frank Farm (Hawaii)
	Aitofele Sunia (American Samoa)
Executive Director	Kitty M. Simonds

In Memory: Richard "Kuni" Sakamoto

Richard "Kuni" Sakamoto—a pioneer in Hawaii's fishing industry and sensei for fishers and scientists alike—passed away on Dec.13, 1999, at the age of 80. He was buried at sea off the island of Guam, where he had lived for 30 years.

Kuni was born in Japan and received his early training in fishing there. From 1945 to 1968, he applied these skills in Hawaii fisheries as diverse as black coral diving, pole-and-line tuna fishing and bottomfish handlining. He was one of the explorers who developed the modern fishery for bottomfish in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, operating his own vessel, the F/V *Kaku*, as far north as Maro Reef and surviving the sinking of another vessel, the F/V *Osprey*.



Richard "Kuni" Sakamoto

In 1968, Kuni was recruited by the Guam Fish and Wildlife Division to train residents of that territory in fishing techniques. From 1973 to 1976, he worked for Tenbata Guam Inc., a seafood import/export company. In 1976, he became a marine technician at the University of Guam Laboratory, where he remained for the next 23 years. Kuni also served on the board of directors of the Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association (1977–1980) and the advisory panel of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (1977–1992).

Kuni's knowledge of fish habits and fishing techniques was unsurpassed. He embodied the Hawaiian concept of *malama* (nurturing, caring) for all living things. He will not be forgotten.

He is survived by his mother, Midori Sakamoto; brother Nobuto Sakamoto; and sister Tatsume Miyamoto, all living in Japan, and by his extended family and friends on Guam and in Hawaii.